

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NAGOYA

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NAGOYA, 461-0004 JAPAN

T E L :81-52-935-2223

F A X :81-52-935-2254



November 4, 2021

Bishop Goro Matsuura

Dear parishioners,

### **Diocese of Nagoya's Holy Year: Thanking God for His Gift (A GIFT) and Moving into a New Era**

**[A-Aichi G-Gifu I-Ishikawa F-Fukui T-Toyama]**

+The Peace of the Lord

Next year, on February 18, 2022, the Diocese of Nagoya will celebrate its 100th Year anniversary since its foundation.<sup>1</sup> During the meeting of the Diocesan Council on Mission and Pastoral Care on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, it was decided to designate one year from February 2022 as the "Holy Year of Nagoya Diocese." The following procedures will be specifically implemented to show our gratitude for the Lord's guidance over the past 100 years and take a further step forward together in joy.

#### Notes

1. On Sunday, February 13, 2022, the Diocese will celebrate the 100th anniversary Mass, and the following year will be the "Holy Year of Nagoya Diocese." At the concluding Mass of the Holy Year (Pentecost Sunday of 2023), we will report to each other on our efforts during the year and confirm our new course of action. The following activities will be carried out during the Holy Year.
  - (i) Study the 100 years of missionary history of the Diocese of Nagoya.
  - (ii) Pilgrimage (prayer)

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<sup>1</sup> The Apostolic Prefecture of Nagoya was established on February 18, 1922. It was separated from the Diocese of Tokyo. Rev. J. Reiners (Society of the Divine Word) was appointed administrator of this new Apostolic Prefecture and in 1925, he became the Apostolic Prefect. In 1941, Rev. Magoshiro Matsuoka was appointed as the Administrator of Nagoya Apostolic Prefecture (he also served as the Administrator of Niigata Apostolic Prefecture), and became the Administrator of Nagoya Apostolic Prefecture in 1945.

Establish major pilgrimage sites according to historical divisions (or genres) and make public and private pilgrimages.

(iii) Read the "Signs of the Times" of our times, focusing on the Nagoya Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Guidelines (2015 "Bishops' Letter"), and consider the mission of the diocese in the new era entrusted to us by Christ.

2. On studying the 100th anniversary process, we divide the era into the "prehistory," which was the foundation of the Diocese of Nagoya, and the 100th anniversary into the "first period" and the "second period," as follows.

**[Pre-History]** (Christianity from Xavier onward, from the Meiji Re-Mission to 1922)

**The Meiji Era of Re-Mission** (the work of missionary congregations and religious orders in the Diocese of Nagoya and the current situation of the diocese)

### **100 Years of the Diocese of Nagoya**

First Period (40 years) 1922 - 1962

From the establishment of the Apostolic See of Nagoya to the Second Vatican Council after the end of the war in 1945

Second period (60 years) 1962 - 2022

From Vatican II through NICE (National Conference for the Advancement of Evangelical Missions) to the present

## **To work on the Holy Year of Nagoya Diocese**

### **1. On the Holy Year**

The origin of the Holy Year is found in the Old Testament (Leviticus 25:1-55), when the Israelites celebrated the year of Jubel (Jubilee), the year following the seventh Sabbatical year or the 50th year in which they observe a year of rest wherein they let the land rest every seven years. *Jobel* is the Hebrew word for "ram's horn" (Joshua 6:4), which combined with the Latin *jubilum*, "shout of joy," came to mean "horn of good tidings." The "good news" included land rest, debt forgiveness, and the release of slaves.

The year of Jubilee is closely associated with the "Sabbath," which has its origin in the Genesis creation story in which God rested on the seventh day. In Exodus 20, which contains the "Ten Commandments," it is written

*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates..." (Ex. 20:8-11)*

Everyone was supposed to be equal before God but inequality, discrimination, and the gap between the rich and the poor rose among the people. In the midst of these realities, the Ten Commandments say,

*"If you bring up the holy number seven, and every seventh day, or every seventh day, is a holy time, then and only then should you remember that all people are equal."* (Michiko Ota, *A New Creation*, p. 39)

In other words, "*a mechanism for bringing equality into a broken world*" and "*a program for restoring equality*" (p. 40 in the same book) are the original meaning of the Sabbath. The meaning of the current Lord's Day is also connected to this.

## 2. "Holy Year" in the Diocese of Nagoya

Based on the meaning above, the Diocese of Nagoya would like to take this Holy Year as a time to "restore the reality of this modern world to the original state that God originally desired and created." In this context, we, as a Diocese and as followers of Christ, will pray and ask what is the mission entrusted to us in this land today. For this purpose, we will study history.

<What does history ask of us?>

The 100 years of prehistory and the first half of the first period that followed were indeed a history of suffering due to persecution. Why did these persecutions occur? What caused the clash between the ideas of society and faith? What did the faithful and the Church compromise and what did they not compromise?

From the latter half of the first period to the second, postwar Japan achieved remarkable economic development and became a stable society. What did we gain and lose in our lives of faith during this period of rapid economic growth? What happened to our faith and the missionary zeal of the Church?

After the war, when religious freedom was granted, the Church in Japan developed greatly with the help of not only parishes but also schools and other institutions including that of missionary and religious congregations (from other countries). This is also the foundation of the present Nagoya Diocese. However, if somewhere in our consciousness, we still have a dependency on someone else to build the Church and someone else to do the missionary work for us, the Church will gradually weaken.

On the one hand, in the postwar world, there were major issues (North-South problem, East-West problem) that were causing a tremendous amount of turmoil. But the Church was closed to these realities. Realizing that she was out of touch with the reality of what was happening to the people, the Church undertook various renewals, such as the Second Vatican Council in the world and the National Incentive Convention for Evangelization (NICE) in Japan. Where is the fruit of that renewal now? And what is the role of the Church in today's dramatically changing society?

In this way, we accept the questions posed by the history of the 100th anniversary. And through prayer and pilgrimage, we will touch the heart of Christ who has been and will continue to walk with us, seeking the zeal and power to proclaim the gospel for a new era.